

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

VOL. I.]

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[NO. 3.]

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

LUKE XXIII. 42 and 43.—*And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

(Concluded from p. 18.)

When all was night, and no bright ray of light appeared,
When devils triumphed, and foes flung out their scorn;
Then to trust a Saviour's power; to own him God,
And venture all my vast concerns with him,
My soul, this must be FAITH.

We have heard of the dying thief's request in his last moments, his confession, his reverence of God, his humility, and his victorious faith; let us now, for a few moments, contemplate the importance of the dying Saviour's answer, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Stupendous condescension. Was this the answer he had a right to expect? The Saviour might have said, remember thee, thou vile sinner, who but a few hours ago joined the insulting rabble in casting an odium on my character, and charging me with the blackest of crimes; yes, I will remember thee, and make thee a monument of my displeasure when I arrive at my kingdom. But is this the language of an insulted Saviour; wonder O heavens, and be astonished O earth, Jesus speaks, but he speaks peace: the petitioner sues for a remembrance only—to-day, says Jesus, shalt thou be with me in Paradise. One step from the cross to the crown! The compassionate Saviour seems to forget his own agonies for a moment, to alleviate the sorrows of a dying sinner. How precious in the sight of God must the soul of man be, how great its value; come then, my soul, see thy duty and thy privilege; perhaps no thief, no murderer, yet a sinner, and needs as much to be washed in the blood of Christ as the dying thief; and, unless washed, thou hast no interest in his only acceptable sacrifice. The fountain is still open and thou shalt receive a hearty welcome. We remark,

1. In this passage we behold the godhead of Christ displayed in characters that can never be obliterated. He accepts divine honour upon the cross, and claims a right to dispose of heaven, when and to whom he pleases. *To-day*; yet he says to many after his resurrection, Touch me not, I have not yet ascended—but as God his existence could suffer no suspension.

2. We observe his willingness to save coming sinners; he immediately answers the petitioner. How beautifully is his character as a Saviour set forth in the parable of the prodigal; he beheld him a great way off, he ran to meet him, he fell upon his neck and kissed him. No wonder souls are his jewels, they are dearly purchased: I lay down my life for my sheep. His errand into the world was to save sinners, but let none presume upon a death-bed repentance: one thief saved at the eleventh hour was recorded, that none might despair; and but one, that none might presume.

3. The freeness of this salvation. The thief had no money to buy, no merit to plead; but when he had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave him all. I give, says Jesus, unto my sheep, eternal life—how encouraging to the weary and heavy laden. Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye, &c.

4. The doctrine of the soul sleeping until the resurrection is a libel upon the word of God. To-day, says Jesus, shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Absent from the body, says the apostle, and present with the Lord. To depart and be with Christ is far better.

Lastly. The danger of delay. What thou doest do quickly; there is no repentance in the grave. Death will come; it is sure, perhaps near, perhaps sudden; boast not of to-morrow, the invitation of the gospel is to-day. Now is the accepted time, O flee to the city of refuge. The avenger of God's affronted justice is behind thee, to-morrow and thou mayest be irrecoverably lost. Press on, the door is open, thou art invited.—A feeble saint shall win thee ay, though death and hell obstruct the way.

MINOR.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN HERALD.

CONVERSION of Dr. STOCK, of BRISTOL.

We have lately received a letter from England, informing us that Dr. J. E. Stock, a physician formerly well known in America, where he resided seven years, had, in November last, sent in his resignation as a manager in the *Unitarian* connexion, and his renunciation of their tenets; having become a convert, from a full conviction that those tenets are not conformable to the oracles of God, after having sturdily combated every argument on the subject, and after having critically studied the sacred writings in the original languages, for the purpose of better ascertaining the meaning of those passages which have a special bearing on the subject.

It appears that the Rev. Mr. Vernon,* a worthy Baptist minister settled in the vicinity of Bristol, was providentially the chief instru-

* Mr. Vernon was about the same time the means of leading two daughters of a Socinian minister in that neighbourhood to an inquiry into the foundation of their creed, which ended in their abandonment of it, as contradicting the word of God, and embracing, it is hoped, the truth as it is in Jesus.

A more recent communication informs us of the happy death of Mr. Vernon.

ment in exciting the attention of Dr. S. to a particular inquiry into the nature of his belief, and in leading him to an earnest and prayerful searching of the scriptures of truth, which finally resulted in his abandonment of his former opinions, and in his embracing the Trinitarian faith.

The case of Dr. S. is in our opinion, a very interesting one. It has been the subject of much conversation in England, and has awakened considerable interest also in this country. Shortly after he had made up his mind to leave the Unitarian communion, he wrote a letter on the subject to his friend, the Rev. John Rowe, a minister in that connexion. This letter was not intended nor expected by the writer to have a circulation beyond a very limited circle. As its scope had been much misunderstood, or misrepresented, and some detached passages had found their way in various directions, (without, however, attaching any blame to his friend, in whose possession it was,) Dr. S. at the solicitation of some pious and valuable friends, and with a view to do justice to himself and to the truths which he had embraced, ordered a few copies of his letter to be printed for the use of those friends. One of them has recently been transmitted to the editor of the Christian Herald for publication. He cheerfully complies with the desire of his worthy correspondent, in the hope that it may tend to the edification of those who build all their hopes of eternal life upon the atonement and perfect work of an Almighty Saviour, "God manifested in the flesh;" and may be useful, by the divine blessing, in inducing others to use the means pursued by the writer of it, in order to come to a knowledge of the truth, as revealed in "*the holy scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.*"

The following is the letter above alluded to.

Clifton, (England,) Wednesday, 6th November, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,—I scarcely know in what terms to begin this letter, or how to communicate to you the object of it. Yet I am anxious to be the first to convey to you the intelligence; because I am unwilling that it should reach you, unattended by those expressions of personal regard and respect by which I could wish that it should be accompanied. It will surprise you to be told, that it is become with me a matter of absolute duty to withdraw myself henceforth from the Lewin's Mead Society.

Yes! my dear Sir, such is the fact. In the month of July last, my professional attendance was required for the Rev. John Vernon, the Baptist minister of Downend, who was then on a visit to a friend in Bristol. I found him very ill: so much so, that his other medical attendant and myself have since judged it necessary that he should suspend all his public labours. After attending him here for two or three days, he removed to Downend, where I have since continued to see him about once a week. He felt it a duty to endeavour to lead me to re-consider my religious opinions; and at length, with much delicacy and timidity, led to the subject. I felt fully confident of their truth, and did not on my part shun the investiga-

tion. For some weeks his efforts did not produce the smallest effect; and it required all the affectionate patience of his character to induce me to look upon the arguments on his side, as even worth examining. This spirit of levity, however, was at length subdued, and restrained by the affectionate earnestness of his manner. Now and then he produced a passage of scripture, which puzzled me exceedingly; but, as I was always distrustful, I scarcely ever allowed any weight to it, till after I had coolly examined it at home. I began, however, sometimes to consider, whether it was not *possible* that his observations might contain some truth; and of course was led to examine them with more care and impartiality.

It is necessary here to state, that my letter to Dr. Carpenter, though drawn up some little time before, was dispatched about this period. I advert to this circumstance, because it marks a curious, though, I fear, not an uncommon feature in the human mind. I must however make the avowal, that it was precisely about the interval that occurred between the preparation and the dispatch of the letter alluded to, and of that to you and the second to Dr. Estlin, that the doubts above stated, now and then, at rare intervals, would force themselves upon my mind. Such, however, was my hostility to the sentiments to which these doubts pointed, that I resisted every suspicion of this kind. I treated it as a mere delusion of the imagination: I felt ashamed even to have yielded to such suggestions for a moment; and when Mr. Bright pointed out to me a strong passage in the address to Dr. Carpenter, as if he thought that it might be softened a little, I persisted in retaining it. In fact, I seemed to seek, in the strength of the terms that I made use of, to deepen my own convictions of my previous opinions.*

The letters were sent, and the respective answers received. Still my weekly visits to Mr. Vernon were continued: I still investigated the subject with constantly increasing earnestness; yet I was unaltered; and even when Mr. Bright read the history of the proceedings to the congregation, I felt no regret at my share in them, but, on the contrary, rejoiced in anticipating the future triumphs of Unitarianism.

Here, however, my triumph ceased. Almost immediately afterwards, my doubts returned with tenfold force. I read: I was perplexed. Often, very often, I wished that I had not begun the inquiry. I prayed for illumination; but I found my mind daily becoming more and more unsettled. I have now lying before me a sheet of paper on which I wrote down some of the thoughts of this period, while under their more immediate pressure, as if to relieve, my mind by thus divulging them; for they were disclosed to no human ear. I copy from them this passage:—"If the attainment of

* To elucidate this paragraph, it may, perhaps, be proper to state, that Dr. Estlin, the senior minister of Lewin's Mead, having announced his intention to resign that office, the congregation met, and voted an address of thanks to him for his services. Some time afterwards, they met for the purpose of electing a successor. Their choice fell upon Dr. Carpenter of Exeter, and an invitation was accordingly sent him, which was accepted, and his acceptance was officially announced in another address to each of their ministers. The writer of the above letter was requested to be the organ of expressing the sentiments of the Society upon those several occasions; a request with which he cheerfully complied.

truth be not the result, I am sure that the state of mind in which I have been for some time past is not to be envied."

I think that it was about this time that you returned home. When I advanced to shake hands with you, after the close of the service, you may remember that you observed to me, "Why doctor, you look pale." Pale I was, I have no doubt; for my mind was full of thoughts that chafed each other like a troubled sea; and your return, and the vivid recollection of the letters which it excited, had **not** tended to calm the agitation. In addition to this, I had been in the habit of pursuing the inquiry, night after night, to a very late hour.

Such continued to be the state of my mind during the latter end of September and the whole of October. Towards the end of this latter month, the evidence for the doctrines which I had hitherto so strenuously opposed, seemed progressively to increase. But it was not till this very week that conviction came; and that my mind, unhesitatingly and thankfully, accepted the doctrines of the Supreme Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of atonement, or reconciliation by his precious blood, and of the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit.

I do not; my dear sir, say it by way of commending my earnestness in the inquiry, but I say it in justice to the opinions that I have embraced, that, since this investigation began, I have regularly gone through the New Testament as far as the Epistle to the Hebrews; (the Gospel of John I have read through twice;) that not only every text which has been differently interpreted, occurring in this large portion of the New Testament, but also all those referred to in the controversial volumes mentioned below, were carefully compared with the original, with the improved version, with Mr. Belsham's explanation in his *Calm Inquiry*, and frequently with Dr. Carpenter's *Unitarianism*, the doctrine of the gospel; and that the references to the Psalms and the prophetic scriptures, which occurred in the New Testament, or the other writings alluded to, were also examined in Dr. Priestley's *Notes on the scriptures*. For I am not possessed of, nor have I seen, one orthodox commentary on the scriptures, (with, I think, one exception, in which Dr. Campbell's annotations on Matthew xxii. 41. *et seq.* were shewn me.) The controversial books, on that side, which I have used in this inquiry, are Mr. Wardlaw's two books,* Simpson's *Plea for the Divinity of Jesus*, (of which at this very moment not even a third part is cut open,) Dr. Lawrence's *Critical Reflections, &c. on the Unitarian version*, (on which I will pause to observe, that they first settled my mind as to the authenticity of the introductory chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke,) a Sermon on the atonement by Mr. Hull, six letters by Dr. Pye Smith to Mr. Belsham, and notes taken down from two Sermons preached by Mr. (I believe now Dr.) Chalmers, of Glasgow, upon the following texts—Psalm lxxxv. 10. and Romans viii. 7. Yet these few helps to the better understanding

* Discourses on the principal points of Socinian controversy, and Unitarianism incapable of vindication.

of the Holy Scriptures, though counteracted by the volumes above cited, by long association, by frequent references to other Unitarian volumes in my collection, and by the various other arguments on that side which memory was constantly suggesting, have ultimately led me to the conclusions above stated. But I should grossly belie my own heart, and should think myself guilty of odious ingratitude to the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, if I did not avow my conviction, that, to these means, the teaching of his Holy Spirit has been superadded; for I can, in his presence, affirm, that during the latter part of the inquiry more particularly, the scriptures of truth were never opened by me without profound and fervent prayer for illumination; and almost always with reference to our Lord's promise in St. Luke, chap. xi. ver. 13. Indeed, my dear sir, and friend, I was in earnest. A change so awful, so unexpected, I may add so improbable, which, four months ago only, I should myself have said was impossible, has deeply and solemnly impressed my mind.

That I must encounter much ridicule in consequence of this change, I fully expect. I am sure that I well deserve it; for no person would have burst out more loudly against such an alteration in the views of another, than myself. Nor ought I to omit to add, that my excellent friend, Mr. Vernon, while I was communicating to him the conviction that I had received, and my expectation of being ridiculed for such a change, observed to me, that I certainly must expect it, but be hoped that I was prepared to forgive it. I trust that I shall be enabled to do so.

Upon reviewing this last sentence, my dear sir, I feel myself bound to say, that, in stating this, I hope not to be understood as anticipating any thing of the sort from you, or from your venerable colleague. No! however you may pity my delusion, I feel assured that you will do justice to my motives.

My dear sir, I have extended this letter to a much greater length than I had any expectation of doing when I began it. I began it with alluding to my regard and my respect for you. Will it be deemed inconsistent with either; if I venture to conclude it with a most affectionate wish and prayer—that you and yours, and all who are near and dear to you, may receive every earthly blessing, and may be brought to the knowledge of the truth? I feel it to be my duty to conclude thus, and I shall stand excused. And, Oh! how much is that wish enkindled, when I recollect the seriousness and solemnity of your manner in prayer, and your impressiveness in preaching. How do I wish that endowments of such value were consecrated to those views which I have received. But I feel myself getting upon tender ground. It is difficult to word such a wish without appearing arrogant, or impertinent, or presumptuous; and yet nothing is further from my heart than either of these feelings. Believe me to be, with sincere regard,—Yours, my dear sir,

Rev. John Rowe.

J. E. STOCK.

P. S. I know not whether it may not be unnecessarily minute to add, that during this inquiry, I have looked into Doddridge's Rise

and Progress, and have read through Scott's Force of Truth, and the letters connected with it in Newton's Cardiphonia, and Newton's Narrative of his own life; but it is my wish to omit nothing. I ought also to state, that once, and but once, I have entered another place of worship (Castle Green,) when Mr. Thorpe repeated a Thursday evening lecture on the Trinity; but this produced no conviction at the time, although the recollection of it has, perhaps, been useful to me since.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN.

Report of the Executive Committee for the management of the missions, first commenced by the Rev. John Wesley, the Rev. Dr. Coke, and others; and now carried on under the direction of the Methodist Conference.

(Continued from p. 22.)

II. ASIA.

CEYLON.—The last Report mentioned the death of Dr. Coke, and the arrival of the missionaries at the place of their destination. The manner of their reception, and the stations in which, after solemn prayer for divine direction, they fixed themselves, in order to prosecute the object of their mission, are already known to the public; and nothing remains for the Committee to add on this subject, but to acknowledge the kind hand of God in their disposal, and the thanks they owe to those pious persons on the island, who, from the beginning have interested themselves in their personal comfort, and in the promotion of their object—the conversion of the idolatrous inhabitants. One of those distinguished persons, adorning exalted rank and station by every christian virtue, and consecrating power by employing it only to benefit mankind, is, alas! no more. Lord Molesworth perished in the Arniston transport on his passage home; and the Committee join their regrets with those of the christian world at the loss of a nobleman deeply devoted to the cause of religion, and the decided friend of missions; whose concern for the salvation of the idolatrous subjects of the British empire in the East, would, had he lived, have led him at home to animate by his zeal, and direct by his counsels, those plans for their evangelization, which his conduct to the Wesleyan missionaries in Ceylon, shewed how ardently he patronized abroad. The arrival of the missionaries in Ceylon, is noticed in the second Report of the Columbo Auxiliary Bible Society, established under the immediate patronage of the government, in the following terms:—

“Your Committee cannot pass unnoticed a recent circumstance which, however independent of the proceedings of this society, is yet a subject also of congratulation, because it is happily calculated to promote the grand object of their institution. Five mission-

aries of respectable character, recommended by several distinguished persons of the highest reputation, have lately been sent to this country under the immediate sanction of his majesty's government. They are all Wesleyan Methodists, and were engaged in a mission to Ceylon under the superintendence of Dr. Coke, who most unfortunately died on his passage a short time before the ship arrived at Bombay.

"The loss, at the present moment, of a man like Dr. Coke, cannot be sufficiently lamented: zeal, ability, and perseverance, tempered by a mature judgment, are wanting to promote the great work of establishing genuine christianity in the East.

"It is to every sincere christian an object of the most anxious solicitude, that the first missionaries who came into British India, under the avowed sanction of the king's government, should so regulate their zeal in the propagation of the gospel, as by their prudence to overcome those prejudices which have so long resisted even the attempt. From his age, experience, and known character, we had every reason to expect this discretion from Dr. Coke; and we have little reason to doubt the devoted zeal of a man who died in his 67th year, on his 19th voyage across the Atlantick upon a religious mission.

"It may with reason be hoped, that his surviving friends have imbibed his spirit, and learnt enough of his intention, during the close intimacy of a long voyage, to carry into execution those plans which Providence had permitted him only to devise. They have already begun in a manner to create a general prepossession in their favour.

"The selection of this island, as the first object of an authorized mission, is a proof of the temperate deliberation with which the measure has been concerted, and a rational ground for confiding under Providence in its final success. A rash, headlong zeal would have courted the difficulties of a mission to Bengal, or the peninsula of India. But the natural place for men to choose, who have really at heart the promotion of christianity in British India, is beyond all doubt the island of Ceylon.

"It is that island where a zealous missionary may have at once free scope to exert all his powers; and when once the christian religion is there firmly established, it will easily spread, under the blessing of divine providence, to every part of the Indian empire."

The third Report of the Columbo Bible Society makes honourable mention of the diligence and usefulness of the brethren at their respective stations, after the lapse of a year; and the Committee bring forth these testimonies under the persuasion, that it must give the greatest satisfaction to all the subscribers to the Methodist Missions, to learn from authority which cannot be suspected of partiality, that the men who have been sent out at their expence have made "*full proof of their ministry.*" Their proceedings, indeed, have been such as a sleepless zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of men, alone could dictate; and they have exhibited a striking model of the true missionary character to all who may follow

them in their benevolent career. By adopting the method of preaching by interpreters, they have prevented that loss of time which would have been occasioned by their remaining unemployed till they had mastered the native tongues; and their attempts have been owned of God. In some instances their Pagan and Mahometan interpreters have been converted; feeling the saving power of those truths, they were employed merely to transmit to others; and imperfect as the mode of teaching by interpreters must necessarily be, the gospel, even thus inadequately announced, has proved to the hearers "*the power of God unto salvation.*" Some priests of Budhu, and several natives, both Mahometans and Budhists, have been brought to know the "*living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent;*" and the learning, rank, and influence of some of these converts has given an impressiveness to their example which has been very extensively felt.

The testimony of the Report of the Columbo Bible Society to the importance of Ceylon as a missionary station, has been just given; of the pressing necessity which existed and still exists for missionary efforts there, the most affecting evidence is afforded by every communication from this quarter. The religion of Budhu, a form of Paganism, which more extensively enslaves the race of man than any other, being, with slight shades of difference, the superstition of two thirds of the idolatrous inhabitants of the whole earth, is the prevailing religion of Ceylon. In the midst of an immense number of gods, 30,000 of whose names they know, they are truly without God in the world. Their chief god Mahabrachma, probably the traditional true God, they place in the highest of their twenty-six heavens, excluding him from all concern in human affairs, and refusing him all religious adoration whatever; thus professing "*to know God,*" but "*glorifying him not as God,*" and leaving themselves "*without excuse.*" With the worship of Budhu, of whom they have the most confused and contradictory accounts, they associate the worship of devils, and erect their dewalas, or devil's houses, close to their temples. Their priests, though some of them are men of considerable erudition, are in general a body of artful impostors, who prey upon the credulity of the people, and make a gain of their ignorance and vices. The infernal institution of caste, though not so rigorous as among the followers of Brahma, exists in a form which entails great misery on the people, and exhibits additional proof of that unfeelingness which in different degrees characterises every kind of heathenism. Those of the lowest caste are in a state of the deepest degradation. They live in the woods by themselves, and are never suffered to come near any town or village. Indolence and vices of the most odious kinds, murder, incest, adultery, fornication, perjury, and falsehood fill up the shades of this dark picture of society among the followers of Budhu in Ceylon; nor can a more favourable view be presented of the moral condition of the other sects of idolaters, or of the Mahomedans, who are mixed with the original inhabitants.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

Extracts from letters addressed to professor Van Ess at Marburg, respecting the circulation of the Holy Scriptures in Roman Catholic States in Germany.

From a Clergyman in a Catholick district of the kingdom of Wurtemberg. March 31, 1815.

The want of Bibles is very great in these parts; in many places scarcely three or four Bibles are to be found. If the Almighty would excite as ardent a desire after his holy word in the minds of the people as the deficiency of Bibles is great, some thousands would hardly be enough for the small circle in which I act.

From the same. May 6, 1815.

It is very pleasing to me, that several of the clergy are actively employed in the promulgation of the Holy Scriptures, and that many of the laymen often take the Bible, a book, before hardly known to them by name, into their hands, and gladly read it on Sundays and festivals.

The want of Bibles in these parts is great; among most congregations scarcely more than three or four are to be met with: but they were not conscious of this want, and had no desire to be supplied.

Old Legends only were in the hands of the people; and they were satisfied with them, first, because many were not acquainted with the holiest of all books; secondly, the Bible was not recommended to them to be read; and lastly, they had no money to purchase one. They had inherited these old Legends from their ancestors, but no Bibles. The persuasions of the clergy, the example of the most enlightened among them, and the opulent laymen, in whose hands they now observe the Bible, the prospect of their obtaining it gratis, if they have a desire for it, the co-operation of the inspectors of schools, with whom I am in connexion, and who have, by my advice, made use of the Bible this year as a school prize; all these circumstances combined, have a powerful effect in stimulating the people to a wish to peruse the Holy Scriptures.

Postscript to a letter from another Catholick Clergyman.

The observations of sound unsophisticated and unperverted human reason on the Bible, will no doubt be interesting to you, imperfect as they are. Here are a few instances exactly as they occurred.

A poor country woman told me, that she frequently read in the book that I gave her; the histories of Jesus Christ pleased her much.

A woman in my neighbourhood told me, she had during the week days very little time to read. She rejoiced when Sunday evening came; she then could take the book in hand; she had lately sat up till eleven o'clock at night, and had read about the Lord's Supper and the sufferings of our Lord and Saviour.

A peasant told me, that the old father Dean had forbidden his flock to read the Bible; but, said he, I think he must be wrong, because the Bible is the word of God; and it is expressly mentioned

in it, that it is given for instruction; besides, Jesus himself had said, "He that is of God, heareth God's word;" and why should not we read it?

Many persons in Darmstadt returned thanks for the Bibles sent them. Some added; "they were not able to read themselves, but their children read sometimes to them; many good things were contained in the book, particularly about Christ the Lord; they would have some part of it read to them every Sunday, as they lived too far off to come hither to hear a sermon."

SPEECH OF THOMAS KNOX.

(Concluded from p. 25.)

Now permit me, worthy chairman, to take a glance at Ireland, the sister kingdom. United as she is to this country by ties which are mutual, and I trust, never to be broken, she has involved with yours, her interest, her existence, and her happiness. I must, lament the misguided policy of that system which has cramped her energies, and operated in a way inimical to the designs of this institution, inasmuch as it has tended to irritate the mind, or produce a servile habit; to abase her native character, and demoralize the people. The circumstances that have evolved since the period of our connexion it is unnecessary, it would be invidious, to detail, they are written in the heart-rending characters of crime and revolution; may they be blotted from the page of recollection, and the commencement of a new æra obliterate the remembrance of the past! A brighter day dawns upon my native country; the horizon brightens in my view! Education, that potent genius, confers upon its objects the wisdom and experience of past ages, expands the mind, informs the intellect, and cultivates those talents that adorn life and cheer its tedious journey. It may, when I mention Ireland, be in a peculiar sense termed the Esias of the gospel? Education gains ground rapidly in that country; Lancaster has given impulse to the generous feeling of an Irish publick; he needs no mausoleum to record his labour or transmit his name to posterity; he will leave behind many living monuments; he forms the character of the rising generation, and their virtues will embalm his memory. Schools multiply amongst us, and will, I trust, at no distant period be open to the whole mass of our population. But, let the Bible accompany the march of intellect: for, as the moon derives from the sun her light, and pours her silver ray upon creation, so does education derive all its lustre from religion, and become at once an ornament and a blessing. The British and Foreign Bible Society, which in the beautiful harmony of its system, can attend to the minute or embrace the whole, looked with anxious eyes upon Ireland, and under its auspices the Hibernian Bible Society was established, and rose with rapid, but progressive steps, to importance. You will have some idea of its progress, when I tell you, that in one year not less than twenty three branch Bible Societies became connected with the Irish institution; and now, not a single county in that

kingdom is without its Bible Society, while in some there are two or three. In the same time, between twenty and thirty thousand copies of the Bible and Testament were distributed; and they were received and read with avidity. Oh! methinks I see, at the close of the evening under the spreading foilage, before his mud-wall cottage, the spectacled eye of the aged peasant intent on the sacred volume, his family around him, all deriving from it their ideas of good and evil. Even the catholick proffers his assistance:—(I hail it as a favorable omen of the future!) You will excuse me while I relate to you a most interesting circumstance. A respectable catholick priest in Ireland, who had admitted the Testament into his parish, one day thus addressed his flock:—"I hold in my hand the New Testament in the Irish language; I shall now read to you, in a language which you all understand, the gospel for the day, which you have just now heard in a language you did not understand," and he read a chapter according to St. Matthew. They all listened with earnestness and attention. "Be not disturbed" said he, "by any reports you may hear relative to the difference between the protestant and catholick translations: there is just as much difference between them, as in my saying two and four make six, and four and two make six—a difference in the words makes no alteration in sense. You will hear these scriptures continually from our children, and hearing, may you find salvation." If this union of catholick and protestant become general, it will be attended with incalculable benefit to that country; it will stifle that spirit of intolerance, which has, like the Sirocco of the desert, sometimes unseen, but always with fatal certainty, blasted the germ of virtue, and blighted the bud of genius.

But a prominent feature in the history of the British and Foreign Bible Society is, that the female part of the community are marshalled in its ranks. Objections have indeed been made to their active co-operation, as if women were to be here the partners in our toils, and not candidates for eternity: but, in defiance of prejudice, thirteen female Bible associations exist on the continent of America, two in this country, and one in the metropolis of the sister kingdom, which, patronized by ladies of the first rank and character, has already moved an efficient auxiliary to the national institution in Dublin; and though it may not be found necessary or expedient generally to establish those associations, yet, knowing the influence of the female character on society, we would wish to enlist them in our service. Oh! when the maternal smile diffuses happiness around you, and the domestick circle basks in the sunshine of your presence, when you cherish with the milk of human kindness your rising offspring, and imbue their tender minds with the principles you derive from that oracle, which gives to every social bond its awful sanction, to life the charms of the present, and in the spirit of prophecy, certainty to the future; you will tell them millions are still destitute of the blessing, but that there exists in the land that gave them birth, an institution which promises the inestimable gift to every kindred, nation, tongue, and people, under heaven's canopy; and which, when the prisoner is released from his captivity, gives him the Bible as his legacy, which

tells him to unclasp his helmet and sheath his sword, to let it sleep for peace in the scabbard; which, breathing peace, arrests the warrior in his career, when he goes forth like a destroying angel, to immolate thousands at the gory shrine of a lawless and infuriate ambition; which by removing the cause will release us from all the calamities of war—the greatest curse and moral evil afflicted humanity every entailed upon itself.

The Bible Society, in its progress, will level that mound which has so long separated the Mahometan, the Jew, and the Gentile; the deluded follower of the prophet will lay aside his alcoran, and receive the Bible; the Israelite will reject the talmud, and own his Saviour, and the Gentile will flock to the ensign which had been set up for the nations, to assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. This society has traversed Europe, making every capital the estuary of its love and successful labours. In Asia, the pious missionary—who goes, like Paul, bound in the spirit, not knowing what may befall him on his journey—who surrenders all his present enjoyments to endure perils, hunger and fatigue, and climbs the hill or descends the valley, to publish the glad tidings of the gospel—is become the active instrument of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and trims the midnight lamp to give the Bible to the Hindoo, in an intelligible language, to rescue him from perishing on the banks of the Ganges, or from being crushed under the vehicle that carries his wooden god. The millions of Chinese lost in idolatry, and ignorant of that resurrection which is the earnest of their own, are already visited; and you will irrigate the deserts of Tartary with the fertilizing streams of the gospel; there will be given unto them the glory of Lebanon, the excellency of Sharon and of Carmel. Nor are the remote and extensive regions of the northern Asia beyond the reach of your genial influence; the Siberian exile, whether lost in the deep recess of some lonely glen, or buried in the eternal gloom of his dreary forests, when light shines into darkness he will bless you. For more than two centuries has western Africa been visited by Europeans, but alas! the flag under which they sailed was long the signal for rapine and desolation, though now the harbinger of peace and blessing. You have indeed signed the death warrant of slavery, broken the chains of negro thralldom, and told the sons of Guinea to be free; it remains, then, for you who have released the body from its fetters, to emancipate that part which is immortal, to point to an everlasting inheritance, to that kingdom whose light is God, and whose foundation is eternity. May “He who can draw out the Leviathan with a hook,” put his yoke upon the barbarian, and christianize, through the instrumentality of this institution, that extensive continent, from its interior to its extreme shores. But let us cross the Atlantick; there is a numerous family; more than one hundred and twenty Bible Societies have started into existence in North America; the Indian, wandering in his native wilds, is an object of their charity; the Esquimaux even now read the scriptures in their own language. Nor has the southern continent of the

new world been forgotten; it has been visited by the bounty of that society which considers the whole human family equal in their claims, as the children of one universal Parent. Oh! could we hover on the wing of fancy in the blue concave, and behold our sun but as a twinkling star, and the every twinkling star that lights up the fabric of nature, as the sun and centre of another system! Could we see the Almighty Father with his fiat give impulse to all the planetary worlds that revolve around them, while we contemplated the immensity of the design, and the magnitude of the power that could accomplish! Lost in wonder and astonishment, the mind sinks into its own vacuity. But, when we remember that the same supreme intelligence which supports the whole, has condescended to reveal his will to mankind, for their government, and gives, through the mediator of the new covenant, a more perfect dispensation, Oh! then, to muse his "ineffable praise" we must call in the aid of "expressive silence," and while we receive the invaluable favour, let us give some evidence of our gratitude by the diffusion of the blessing. Let, then, the British mariner and christian, offering in one hand the documents of Heaven, with the other unfurl the swelling canvass to the gales of a propitious Providence, to explore every region and every clime, touch upon every shore and visit every island that rises from the bosom of the ocean. May we not look forward for that time when the temple of the Juggernaut, of the Lama, and the Japanese idol, and every temple that has an altar raised unto the unknown God, will be in ruins, and one universal temple be erected, in which the people will be the living church—the heart, the altar, and the license, adoration and gratitude! To realize this rapturous prospect and prophecy, some may offer their time, some their talents, and others a pecuniary sacrifice; all may throw their mite into the treasury, looking for a reward in that "undiscovered country," where the light will yet burst upon your enraptured vision. A young man has trespassed too long upon your attention: there may be those, but I trust there is no one present, who will call zeal enthusiasm, or an expression of interest in the concerns of this noble institution, presumption. In such a cause we must not be bashed by the strictures of the critick, the frown of the worldling, or the malignant smiles of ignorance and envy: let me then petition you for the millions of human beings who are still sunk in the lower depths of barbarism and degradation, for the wild Arab and the tawny Hot-tentot, for the savage devouring cannibal, for the wretched inhabitant of Terra del Fuego, whether he traverse the mountains covered with burning lava or clothed in perpetual snow; for the Indian still wielding the murderous tomahawk, and the shivering native of Kamschatka. Oh! on such a theme, I forget my humble character, and would entreat you, by that love which is the characteristick of that gospel we promulgate, and which flows universal to the whole human family, by every domestick duty and social obligation, by the shedding of that blood which was to seal and ratify the new covenant, to aid us in the accomplishment of this our one grand and unexceptionable object, till every mountain rise an altar, and eve-

ry stream flow a libation; till every valley ring with Hosanna, and every mouth become vocal with one utterance. In our own favoured country, we will give stability to the throne and constitution, peace to the community, and to the state a vigorous and enlightened population. We will do more than this—we will make the Bible the religion of the world!

DOMESTICK.

BALTIMORE FEMALE MITE SOCIETY.

COMMUNICATED.

IN consequence of an account published in the Christian Herald, in June last, of the formation of a society in Newark, (N. J.) to aid in establishing schools for the education of heathen youth in India, a few ladies in Baltimore formed the benevolent design of attempting something of the kind among themselves. They mentioned their plan to several others, who entered into it with promptitude; and on the eighth of January of the present year they met, and formed a society denominated the "Baltimore Female Mite Society, for the education of heathen children in India."

Although the annual subscription is but fifty cents; and notwithstanding the severity of the season, the Directors were enabled, by the blessing of God upon their exertions, and through the liberality of their fellow citizens of both sexes, to collect, by the beginning of April, SEVEN HUNDRED DOLLARS; which they have transmitted to the Treasurer of the Board of Commissioners for foreign missions, in Boston.

The following letters passed between their Secretary and Dr. Worcester, the corresponding Secretary of the Board.

Copy of a letter from Miss Rebecca Rooker, Secretary of the Baltimore Female Mite Society, to the Rev. Dr. Worcester, corresponding secretary of A. B. C. F. M.

BALTIMORE, APRIL 6, 1817.

SIR,—The very important and affecting communications received at different times from our missionaries in the east, having created much sensibility in the hearts of some persons in our city, and induced them to interest themselves in the behalf of the poor heathen, with the hope of being enabled to snatch a portion of them from that benighted state in which they are at present plunged, a society has been established, denominated "The Baltimore Female Mite Society, for the education of heathen children in India." This society, having been in operation three months, has collected the sum of seven hundred dollars, which will be transmitted to Boston immediately upon receiving information from you, sir, to whom, and

in what way, it should be forwarded. The object of the society is the education of heathen children; and the money is to be exclusively appropriated to that purpose. Dr. Worcester will please to lay this letter before the Board of Foreign Missions. The earliest answer to it, together with the latest intelligence from Bombay, will be gratefully acknowledged.

By Order, REBECCA ROOKER, *Secretary.*

Dr. Worcester's answer to the above.

SALEM, APRIL 22, 1817.

DEAR MADAM,—Your favour of the 6th inst. was early received. I am greatly rejoiced to learn, that the females in Baltimore are coming forward with so noble a spirit of liberality, to testify their love to their Lord and Saviour, and to “minister to him of their substance,” for the advancement of his glorious work of grace and salvation among the poor heathen. In regard to the money collected, or to be collected, you will receive the particular information which you desire, from our treasurer, Jeremiah Evarts, esq.

Our “latest intelligence from Bombay,” was down to the last of last September. Our missionaries were proceeding in their work with great diligence and ardour. Every day they preach to the heathen, at the places of their resort, and in their own language, the words of eternal life. They had translated, and were about printing for distribution, important portions of the Holy Scriptures, and some religious Tracts. They had under instruction in their family and in their schools, about two hundred heathen youth and children; and in this department particularly their prospects were very encouraging. In beholding, however, the many millions around them in the most deplorable state of moral corruption and wretchedness, their hearts seem to melt within them; and they plead in the most earnest manner, for the help and the prayers of all who love the Lord Jesus, and those for whom he died. They will not plead in vain. Prayers will be offered for them continually, and free-will offerings for their help will continually be made. With such sacrifices God is well pleased; in such sacrifices the benevolent heart finds the richest satisfaction. The members of “the Baltimore Female Mite Society,” I doubt not, have felt, and will more and more feel, the import of the words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

To them I beg to tender through you the christian salutations of the board of commissioners; and am,

Dear madam, very respectfully your friend,

S. WORCESTER,

Miss Rebecca Rooker.

Cor. Sec. of A. B. C. F. M.

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